

DHEC: Dental Lifeline Network: Donated Dental Services

Request: **\$45,000**

The funding will allow for the creation of the Donated Dental Services program to be created in South Carolina. This program will provide comprehensive pro bono care for needy disabled, elderly, and medically compromised individuals living in the state.

How will it work?

- o Dentists, using their respective offices, will fully donate pain-relieving, dignity-restoring, and life-enhancing care for needy disabled, elderly, and medically-compromised individuals. A part time social worker staffing the program will determine general eligibility of applicants, inform volunteers about prospective patients, refer individuals when authorized by a dentist, and arrange the involvement of volunteer specialists and laboratories. Implants, gold casting alloys, denture teeth, zirconium and other specialized materials are donated by manufacturers when needed for DDS cases. Sonic technology toothbrushes are also contributed by the manufacturer when recommended by a volunteer dentist for a DDS patient.

First year projections.....

- o Approximately **170 dentists and 15 dental laboratories** will participate in the DDS program.
- o More than 100 individuals will complete treatment during the first year. They will receive at least **\$125,000** in therapies, creating a treatment value to operating cost ratio during the first year of at least **\$2.63: \$1**.

History & State Benefits:

The National Foundation of Dentistry for the Handicapped (NFDH), a charitable affiliate of the American Dental Association, began DDS thirty years ago as a small pilot project in Colorado. Fifteen-thousand (15,000) dentists and 3,000 laboratories throughout the country currently participate. Since its creation, the DDS program has provided over \$150,000,000 in therapies to 100,000 individuals.

- o Today, almost every state participates in the DDS Program.
- o The main funding for this program comes from a charitable organization, not the federal government. Since the inception of this program, state governments who have invested minimal funding to this program for operating costs have seen meaningful financial returns with lower healthcare costs to those in need.
- o Each dollar appropriated for most health care programs generate less than a dollar in treatment because of overhead and other costs. By contrast, every dollar invested in the DDS program is leveraged into substantially greater value. Among all DDS projects nationally, each dollar spent on operating costs returned more than \$9 in pro bono therapies. Indirect benefits, such as decreased public expenditures for emergency room visits and antibiotics for infections, further augment the financial return.